

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 828

By Weaver

A RESOLUTION to recognize the importance of the honeybee and pollinators to the agricultural industry of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the honeybee is the official agricultural insect of the State of Tennessee; healthy, productive colonies of honeybees not only produce more honey, they also provide better pollination for Tennessee's food supply and propagation of many species of plants; and

WHEREAS, proper pollination by all pollinators, including honeybees, bumblebees, solitary bees, syrphid flies, beetles, wasps, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, flies, and beetles, yields larger, more uniformly shaped, marketable fruits and vegetables; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, Tennessee market value of nursery, vegetable, fruit, and nut crops were valued at over \$4.1 million; and

WHEREAS, current registration of honeybee colonies in Tennessee is not sufficient to maximize crop pollination as only 37,005 honeybee colonies are registered with the State. It is estimated that the minimum number of honeybee colonies needed in Tennessee for pollination is 84,362 colonies; for maximum pollination, the number needed would be 421,810 colonies; and

WHEREAS, honeybee colonies in Tennessee are experiencing significant annual losses as a result of varroa mite infestation, viruses, diseases, and lack of use of best management practice by beekeepers; and

WHEREAS, nationally, fifteen percent is the acceptable annual winter loss value, and losses for the past few years have been high: thirty-five percent in 2015, seventy percent in 2016, eighty percent in 2017, and forty percent in 2018; preliminary information for 2019 suggests losses will be more than fifty percent; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we declare it is our goal to collaboratively and strategically increase honeybee and pollinator populations through the protection and enhancement of habitats, scientific research, and dissemination of honeybee health information and production information to beekeepers and the general public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the apiary registration program, the monitoring and surveying for invasive pests and diseases of pollinators, and disease diagnosis and containment of contagious diseases in honeybees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we must increase pollinator populations through public awareness of habitat protection, proper pesticide use, and adherence to the FieldWatch program for pesticide applicators and crop producers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we can increase honeybee populations through the support and awareness of Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program opportunities and support of scientific research from colleges and universities related to honeybee health and best management practices.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State should collaborate with the Tennessee Beekeepers Association, local beekeeping clubs, and University of Tennessee Extension to provide beekeeping and pollinator educational opportunities in all regions of the State. These programs should include the reporting and practical implementation of research results, establish best management practices for honeybee colony production and health, and promote the training of University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University extension agents in basic beekeeping knowledge and skills so that they may serve as a resource.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the State Apiary Registration program in the data collection and reporting of colony numbers, health status, and efforts to provide for monitoring and surveying for invasive pests and diseases of pollinators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support the provision of training for an increased number of hive inspectors available to serve all parts of the State.